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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

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1. Mr. BÍRÓ (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan) said that, given the restricted possibilities of in-country verification available to him, he had sought a response from the Sudan's government agencies, notably the Minister of Justice, concerning the most serious allegations of human rights violations. Having then decided to focus on obtaining testimonies from alleged victims or witnesses of human rights violations, he stressed that government officials had been highly cooperative throughout most of his visit to the Sudan. That cooperation, however, had ultimately been disrupted by the arrest and harassment of persons who had communicated information to him. He hoped there would be no reoccurrence of such incidents, which interfered with his mandate and violated the terms of reference of his mission.

2. The interim report on the situation of human rights in the Sudan (A/48/601) concentrated on the most serious violations of the right to life, security, liberty and dignity of the person in the northern Sudan. He expressed special concern over the fate of the indigenous Nuba community and smaller ethnic groups, whose social structure would be eradicated unless the armed conflict in that area ceased to escalate. A second mission was required to investigate the situation in the southern Sudan, particularly concerning violations committed in the context of the civil war by government forces and factions of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

(Mr. Bíró)

3. Meanwhile, the country's serious human rights situation necessitated intensified monitoring. He would therefore need unlimited access to the relevant areas and adequate resources enabling him to fulfil his mandate. A continuous presence of representatives of human rights organizations would also be beneficial, while the Sudanese Government should investigate cases brought to its attention. In that connection, he welcomed its establishment of a human rights council and an office to handle complaints of abuses by the security forces, and looked forward to receiving further details of their work. Finally, given the disastrous consequences of the armed conflict for the civilian population, he recommended a cease-fire and an immediate end to all attacks on civilians, with food and health care being made available to the needy. Efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and to address the problem of displaced persons should likewise be intensified.

4. Mr. SHIDDO (Sudan) expressed dissatisfaction with the conclusions derived from the interim report, which he hoped the Committee members would read in conjunction with his Government's statement on the matter, shortly due to be circulated as an official document.

5. Mr. DENG (Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons) highlighted the magnitude of internal displacement as an escalating global crisis. Its commonest causes were internal conflicts, communal violence, forced relocation and gross human rights violations, which were most acutely manifested in civil wars and led to extensive human suffering. The international community was often called upon to meet the humanitarian challenges of assisting and protecting the needy and ensuring respect for their fundamental human rights. That role, however, was constrained by the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, while it was also important to remember that not all Governments or controlling authorities were equally able or willing to protect and assist their citizens to an adequate degree. A delicate balance was therefore required between respect for national sovereignty and the normative assumption that sovereignty encompassed responsibilities which could not be disregarded with impunity.

6. His mandate was initially intended to ensure that Governments cooperated with the international community in protecting and assisting the internally displaced. Where Governments failed in their responsibilities of national sovereignty, the international community was obliged to assert its concern and assist the suffering masses. None the less, the enforcement mechanisms for international action remained inadequate and underdeveloped, while controversy concerning the protection available under international law continued to rage.

7. Those theoretical issues required translation into practical policies. The emphasis on country visits and dialogue with Governments on behalf of the internally displaced was therefore significant in that respect. The mandate would thus continue to stress the importance of compiling country profiles, in which connection he referred to his recent visit to Sri Lanka. Acknowledging the full cooperation he had received from the Sri Lankan Government, that visit had also helped to deepen understanding of the generic problems of internal displacement as a worldwide phenomenon and of the complementary roles of Government, national organizations and the international community in addressing them. The problems of internal displacement could be solved only by removing

(Mr. Deng)

the root causes, often embedded in civil wars. Only peace could restore the confidence of the displaced to return to their homes and resume normal life, failing which deprivation would persist and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms would remain elusive.

8. He concluded by reiterating the final hope expressed in his report on internally displaced persons (A/48/579), namely, that the international community would develop normative principles and institutional arrangements for combating the crisis; the appointment of a representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons should not be regarded as a ground for complacency.

9. Mr. VAN CRAEN (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, urged the General Assembly to support unreservedly the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (A/CONF.157/23), adopted by consensus at the recent World Conference on Human Rights, where the promotion and protection of human rights had been affirmed as a legitimate concern of the international community. By recognizing the interdependence between democracy, development and human rights, the Vienna Declaration paved the way for cooperation between States, international and regional organizations and national institutions in promoting all human rights, including the right to development.

10. Referring to the possible establishment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights, he considered that the primary task of the appointee would be universal promotion and protection of human rights. He would cooperate and coordinate with other relevant United Nations bodies, as well as with regional and national human organizations, and could also provide advice, technical assistance, education and information. He could negotiate with Governments in the event of serious human rights violations and would direct the Centre for Human Rights, which should be strengthened to cope with its increased workload. The success of control mechanisms and technical and electoral assistance programmes, which were vital to the promotion and protection of human rights, depended largely on the Centre's ability to function smoothly. With that in mind, he called on all countries to support the Secretary-General's proposals aimed at strengthening the Centre under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Extra resources would also be needed to implement the Vienna Declaration. In addition, non-governmental organizations, which played a crucial role in protecting and promoting human rights, should be free to operate without suffering intimidation or interference.

11. Having expressed the hope that delegations would approve the draft resolution on street children to be introduced by the European Union, he turned to discuss human rights situations in the light of the reports submitted by special rapporteurs and representatives. As for the former Yugoslavia, where gross human rights violations continued despite all international efforts, the European Union would cooperate with the United Nations and other competent bodies to ensure that the perpetrators of those horrific deeds were brought to justice. He reminded all parties to the conflict that persons in distress were entitled to humanitarian assistance and that personnel belonging to international and humanitarian organizations required protection. Demanding an end to the repression of Kosovo's Albanian population, he expressed strong support for the activities of Mr. Masowiecki, the Special Rapporteur of the

(Mr. Van Craen, Belgium)

Commission on Human Rights, and his team, particularly with regard to violence against women.

12. He welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and, condemning all acts of violence in Lebanon, he appealed for the restoration of its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

13. He equally condemned the systematic and persistent human rights violations occurring in Iraq, particularly in the southern marshes and among the Kurdish community in the north, and called on the Iraqi Government to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur. He also unreservedly supported the proposal to station human rights monitors in the country.

14. The European Union was also seriously concerned by the human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and condemned the threats against the life of the author, Salman Rushdie, and the attacks on editors and translators of his book. It also regretted the refusal of the Iranian Government to permit a visit from the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which would appear to be justified. It fully supported Security Council resolutions on Haiti and the efforts of the Special Envoy for Haiti and the Organization of American States Secretaries-General, and would continue to endorse the endeavours of the international community aimed at establishing democracy in Haiti.

15. The European Union urged the Government of Cuba to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights by finally enabling him to visit Cuba in accordance with his mandate. It also called on the Cuban authorities to recognize the right of all Cubans to express and organize themselves freely, and to end intimidation and the imposition of heavy prison terms on opponents of the Government.

16. In Afghanistan, the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of peace and democracy were more necessary than ever. However, a global solution to the problem would endure only if it encompassed the promotion and protection of human rights. The serious human rights violations in Myanmar were also a continuing cause of concern. He demanded, inter alia, the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners, including the Nobel Peace prize winner, and the establishment of conditions which would permit the repatriation of refugees.

17. Condemning the grave human rights violations occurring in the Sudan, he urged the Sudanese Government to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur, and reiterated his appeal to the parties to the conflict to comply with humanitarian law and allow humanitarian organizations to have unhindered access to those in distress.

18. The European Union was deeply concerned at the situation on Cyprus, where the status quo was unacceptable, and reaffirmed its support for the efforts by the Secretary-General to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the

(Mr. Van Craen, Belgium)

question of Cyprus and the restoration of that country's unity, independence and territorial integrity in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. While recognizing the importance of the recent reform of the penal code in Turkey, the European Union was still concerned about the practices of torture and maltreatment, particularly of persons held in detention. He therefore urged the Government of Turkey to ensure full respect for human rights and called upon the Turkish authorities and the Kurdish groups concerned to put an end to the violence and initiate a dialogue.

19. He welcomed the recent amendment of the Constitution in Albania and underscored the need for further efforts to ensure full respect for the rights of minorities. The Syrian Government had recently taken encouraging measures to halt human rights violations in that country. Nevertheless, the European Union remained concerned in that connection and urged the Syrian authorities to ensure full respect for human rights. The reports of an upsurge in political violence in Guatemala were cause for great concern and there was a need for continued efforts to put an end to impunity for human rights violations in that country. The comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement in El Salvador was an essential condition for guaranteeing respect for human rights there. He was deeply concerned about the increase in political violence, including political assassinations, in El Salvador and underscored the need to ensure full implementation of the recommendations by the Commission on the Truth.

20. The European Union condemned the recent coup d'état in Nigeria and called for the re-establishment of democratic institutions and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In Zaire, the deterioration of the situation, including the halting of the democratic process and repeated human rights violations, was alarming. He hoped that the adoption of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/61 on the situation in that country would make it possible to monitor closely the serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Zaire. He strongly condemned the military coup d'état and the inter-ethnic conflict in Burundi, which had caused innumerable deaths and a massive exodus, and underscored the need to restore constitutional order, respect democracy and achieve national reconciliation there.

21. The European Union urged the Government of Equatorial Guinea to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur in view of the serious human rights situation there. The arbitrary arrest, torture and harassment of members of the opposition were continuing. Serious doubts had arisen about the electoral process in that country, where freedom of expression was not guaranteed.

22. He urged all the parties to the conflict in Liberia to bring about a political settlement as soon as possible and ensure respect for human rights. The European Union underscored the importance that it attached to the search for a lasting political solution in Somalia, in full cooperation with the United Nations. It welcomed the progress made by the Organization in the humanitarian field and continued to support the efforts of UNOSOM to promote dialogue between the political factions.

23. The European Union supported the efforts by the Secretary-General to resolve the question of East Timor and stressed the need for a dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia under his auspices. The International Committee of the

(Mr. Van Craen, Belgium)

Red Cross (ICRC) must be allowed to visit the political prisoners in that country. The European Union was concerned about the reports of the continuing human rights violations in East Timor and stressed the importance of speedy implementation for Committee on Human Rights resolution 1993/97.

24. The European Union remained deeply concerned about the human rights situation in China, including Tibet: particularly the holding of political prisoners; violations of the freedom of expression and of the right to demonstrate; and the measures taken against members of the political opposition. The repression of ethnic, cultural and religious groups was deplorable. The European Community took note of the invitation by the Government of China, addressed to the International Committee of the Red Cross, and hoped that ICRC representatives would have access to all detention centres.

25. The violence affecting Kashmir and the ongoing deterioration of the human rights situation in that region remained a source of profound concern. While it was true that terrorist violence must be dealt with firmly, the Indian security forces must nevertheless respect the law.

26. The continuing reports of human rights violations in Sri Lanka were alarming. The European Union condemned the use of violence by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and urged the Government of Sri Lanka to put an end to those violations.

27. Lastly, he expressed regret that some Governments continued to violate the most basic human rights and invoke the principle of national sovereignty in order to avoid sanctions. All States without exception must undertake the task of promoting and protecting all human rights.

28. Ms. MANSARAY (Sierra Leone) underscored the universal nature of all human rights and stressed that their promotion and protection was the primary responsibility of Governments. The promotion of human rights must be linked to the right to economic development. The struggle for development and economic emancipation was at the heart of her country's national efforts to put an end to the grinding poverty in Sierra Leone. In that connection, she underscored her Government's commitment to the Vienna Declaration and the Declaration on the Right to Development.

29. Discrimination against girls, which prevented equal access to education, health care and legal protection, was a major human-rights problem, the solution of which would enhance women's key role in development. The alarming acts of violence committed against girls and women required a firm response on the part of the international community. Since human rights encompassed not only political and civil rights, but also economic, social and cultural rights, there was a need to devise a strategy to protect the rights of disadvantaged groups. Extreme poverty limited the individual's ability to participate and assert his rights, even in a democratic society. Children were the main victims of economic reform in many developing countries. The problems affecting children must be solved by protecting their rights.

(Ms. Mansaray, Sierra Leone)

30. Respect for human rights was the key to democracy and development. The human dimension of development should be given close attention. Human rights were indivisible and could not be divorced from social stability. The United Nations must include the said dimension in all its programmes. Preventive diplomacy must be used to avert massive violations of human rights.

31. Mr. GRANQVIST (Sweden) said that the protection of human rights everywhere was a legitimate concern of all States and the international community as a whole. Despite increased awareness and acceptance of human rights and democracy, flagrant violations of those rights and humanitarian law were a tragic reality for millions throughout the world. Universal ratification of the major international human rights treaties must continue to be a priority. Ratification must be followed by effective implementation which, regrettably, was compromised by an increasing number of far-reaching reservations. An alarming number of reservations were, in form or substance contrary to international treaty law and raised doubts as to whether adherence with such limitations should be considered valid. His Government strongly objected to such reservations and would seriously consider whether to accept the entry into force of treaties between Sweden and States expressing reservations under those terms.

32. The various reports by the Special Rapporteurs showed that the most atrocious violations of human rights - torture, political killings and disappearances - were continuing. In Iraq, the Government was continuing its violent persecution of the population in the southern marshlands and the blockade against the Kurds in the north. Arbitrary and extrajudicial executions, torture and other grave human rights violations were still being carried out on a massive scale. The blatant unwillingness of the Iraqi Government to respond in substance to inquiries by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iraq was deeply disturbing.

33. The human rights situation in Myanmar continued to cause serious concern. In spite of some positive steps by the Government, the overall picture remained critical. The violent repression of ethnic and religious minorities and opponents of the regime must cease. In Haiti, the number of killings and disappearances attributable to the military leadership and security forces had recently increased. Sweden called upon those leaders to respect the Governors Island Agreement and make it possible to establish democratic rule as soon as possible. Sweden considered Security Council resolutions on the situation in Haiti very important and commended the efforts by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

34. The resurgence of political violence in El Salvador was regrettable in view of the hope inspired by the peace process there. The recommendations of the Commission on the Truth should be implemented; the Government should prevent human rights violations carried out by the so-called death squads; and an end put to impunity. In Guatemala, political killings and disappearances were continuing. He hoped that the new Government in that country would take forceful measures to prevent violence. A peace accord, including an agreement on human rights issues, was essential to improve the situation and it was hoped that negotiations would resume as soon as possible.

(Mr. Grangvist, Sweden)

35. The continuing violence and deteriorating human rights situation in Kashmir had given rise to serious concern. The parties involved must endeavour to achieve a peaceful settlement and ensure greater respect for human rights. While Sweden welcomed the steps taken by the Government of Turkey in the legislative field, the prevailing violence and practice of torturing persons in custody still gave rise to grave concern.

36. The abolition of the death penalty worldwide was an issue of fundamental importance. His Government appealed to those States that had not yet done so to adhere to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. In the interim, sentences should not be carried out. Instances where countries had reinstated or expanded the applicability of capital punishment were deplorable.

37. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion was the very basis of human dignity and must be protected. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the suppression of that freedom took particularly grave forms. There were continuing reports of executions without due process, torture and political detention. Systematic discrimination and instances of persecution of members of religious minorities, notably the Baha'i community, were deeply worrying. Sweden shared the very deep concern expressed by many Governments at the death threat against Mr. Salman Rushdie, which was an unacceptable breach of the basic principles of international law. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran should unequivocally disassociate itself from what amounted to incitement to murder and should remove the threat against Mr. Rushdie and other persons associated with the publication of his works.

38. The human rights situation in China was particularly precarious with regard to freedom of thought, assembly and expression. It was deeply reprehensible that citizens advocating democracy and human rights were imprisoned for political reasons and without guarantees of due process. Sweden deplored the repression of ethnic and religious groups and was deeply concerned about the extensive application of the death penalty in that country. His Government's serious concern also related to the human rights situation in Tibet.

39. Sweden was alarmed about the instances of severe maltreatment of dissidents in East Timor. In Cuba, systematic violations of the freedom of expression and association continued unabated and arbitrary detention and harassment were used to intimidate peaceful proponents of human rights and democracy. Conditions in prisons and the treatment of prisoners were well below acceptable standards. He urged the Cuban Government to start cooperating with the Special Rapporteur. Arbitrary arrests, torture and other forms of intimidating the opposition in Equatorial Guinea had given rise to serious concern for his Government and cast serious doubt on the conditions for the electoral process.

40. The role of non-governmental organizations in promoting and protecting human rights was crucial. Sweden called for continued dialogue and cooperation between Governments and those organizations. It was tragic that as apartheid was being dismantled in South Africa, the world was witnessing increased ethnic tension, xenophobia and racist attitudes in other areas. Massive violations of human rights and humanitarian law were continuing in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The perpetrators of "ethnic cleansing", rape and other grave

(Mr. Granqvist, Sweden)

breaches of humanitarian law must be brought to justice. Sweden therefore welcomed the establishment of the International Tribunal to deal with war crimes carried out in the former Yugoslavia. The resurgence of various forms of xenophobia, including anti-semitism, in many countries of Europe and the former Soviet Union, must be checked. Governments had a responsibility to develop clear policies to counter such manifestations among groups and individuals.

41. The upsurge in ethnic tension and the increasing number of conflicts involving national minorities were among the greatest threats to international peace. Full compliance with human rights obligations could resolve or improve many of those situations. National implementation of existing human rights standards relating to minorities should be a priority; further measures should be taken to eliminate discrimination against indigenous populations and should promote United Nations involvement in issues concerning them.

42. Millions of children in all parts of the world were starving and the victims of sexual and economic exploitation. Children were most vulnerable during armed conflicts. The hostilities in Angola, Somalia, Liberia and the Sudan showed the appalling suffering inflicted on children. The continued use of children as members of the armed forces must be unequivocally condemned. The legacy of the exploitation of child soldiers in the conflict in Mozambique would take years to overcome. Sweden strongly supported the request by the Committee on the Rights of the Child that the Secretary-General undertake a study on that question and welcomed the draft optional protocol drawn up by that Committee to raise the minimum age for recruitment of children into the armed forces.

43. Discrimination against women was endemic to most societies. Violence against women occurred on a daily basis in almost all countries of the world. The adoption of the draft declaration on the elimination of violence against women was an important achievement in raising awareness in that regard. The adoption of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities was an important step in enabling the disabled to exercise their human rights on an equal basis with others.

44. To be truly universal, human rights must afford protection to all, irrespective of race, nationality, religion, gender or age. Governments must actively protect all persons, on an equal basis and without discrimination, from encroachments by individuals or groups. The interrelationship between development, democracy and human rights was a forceful argument for Governments to mobilize resources for protecting human rights. Where limited resources were an obstacle, the international community should take action to help individual States fulfil their commitments.

45. The United Nations must be given the means to promote all human rights. Sovereignty could no longer be invoked as an argument against international action to protect human rights when a Government failed to carry out its obligations. The Organization's human rights machinery must be improved in order to meet current and future needs. The Special Rapporteurs, working groups and treaty-monitoring bodies carried out indispensable work in that regard and must be given the necessary political and financial support.

(Mr. Granqvist, Sweden)

46. Lastly, the establishment of the post of a High Commissioner for Human Rights would reflect the priority accorded by the United Nations to that field. It was imperative that the General Assembly should respond to the political momentum and expectations created in that connection at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights.

47. Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that his country had always endeavoured to live up to the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and had tried to encourage other nations to do the same. Sadly, gross violations of human rights persisted around the world as the unspeakable acts that continued to plague the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia demonstrated. The lion's share of the atrocities committed were the responsibility of the Serb leaders in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia. In that connection, the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 must prosecute, to the fullest extent possible, all those who were responsible for ordering and carrying out those crimes against humanity.

48. Human rights continued to be violated in Somalia where the United States, along with other nations, had contributed millions of dollars in humanitarian aid as well as the lives of its servicemen. He hoped that the basic right to life would be guaranteed for every person in Somalia although it was the Somalis themselves who must take the lead in guaranteeing that right. The United States and the international community were also undeterred in their commitment to bring democratic rule to Haiti and to help Haitians create institutions they could trust.

49. Cuba remained a tragic and dark exception to the democratic trend in Latin America. Its Government continued to deprive citizens of their rights to speak and associate freely, while the Cuban navy enforced a "floating Berlin Wall" arresting or killing those who tried to flee the island. He urged the regime to loosen its stranglehold on basic freedoms and to allow the Special Rapporteur to visit the country in order to fulfil his mandate. Since the Burmese regime continued to deny basic freedoms to the Burmese people, and there was a clear connection between arms purchases and continuing human rights violations, his Government had imposed a voluntary arms embargo against Burma and urged all States Members of the United Nations to do the same.

50. The Iranian Government continued to violate human rights on a massive scale including the use of summary executions and widespread torture. In Iraq, the regime was draining the southern marshes, burning villages and attacking civilian centres with artillery. The United States was also greatly concerned about the situation in the Sudan where extrajudicial killings and other abuses had been reported. Serious human rights violations were also occurring in Burundi, Chad and Equatorial Guinea. Although Mauritania had made some progress towards democracy, more needed to be done there.

51. China's practices remained repressive, falling far short of international norms. The security forces had been responsible for torture and arbitrary arrests. China must ensure that forced abortion and mandatory sterilization were not part of its family planning policies.

(Mr. Marrero, United States)

52. Fortunately, there were signs of progress. In that connection, he lauded the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the political transition under way in South Africa, the democratic and human rights revolution in Cambodia and the significant progress in human rights reform in Sri Lanka. While there had been impressive advances towards peace and reconciliation in El Salvador as a result of the key role played by the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), there was concern over the recent murders of members of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) which the Government of El Salvador must investigate. Russia's historic transformation was a source of hope. Fortunately, there were more protectors and guarantors of human rights than there were sinister figures trying to take them away.

53. Mr. BRAHA (Albania) said that, as the process of democratization and the legislative reforms implemented over the previous two years showed, his country was firmly committed to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. While there had been an increased international concern for the respect of human rights, violations thereof were on the rise in many parts of the world particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, Liberia and Haiti.

54. The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina had shocked the entire world. Serbian aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina had resulted in the deaths of about 200,000 people, millions of refugees and destruction of the nation's wealth. It was regrettable that the international community had failed to react to Serbian aggression and that the arms embargo had prevented the Muslims from defending themselves, thus enabling Serbia to continue its policy of "ethnic cleansing". In that connection, the establishment of the International Tribunal would help to restore justice and soothe the international community's outraged conscience.

55. Serious human rights violations were also occurring in Kosovo, Sandzak and Vojvodina. As for Kosovo, the situation there was like "a typical colonial situation" since Slobodan Milošević had embarked upon the creation of a "Greater Serbia" based on the forceful domination of other peoples of the former Yugoslavia by the Serbs. The Albanian majority in Kosovo had been subjected to general repression and Serbian brutality had caused the deaths of several persons. The efforts of the international community to monitor the situation had been thwarted by the Belgrade authorities which expelled the monitoring missions of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

56. The policy of discrimination, particularly with respect to education, health care and information in the Albanian language, coupled with massive and brutal police repression and general economic repression had led to continuous "ethnic cleansing" against Albanians. Consequently, over 300,000 Albanians had left Kosovo over the past three years. The grave human rights situation in Kosovo and the general terror to which the Albanian population was subjected might turn into an open conflict at any time. Helsinki Watch had warned that Kosovo might be the next scene of bloodshed in the Balkans.

(Mr. Braha, Albania)

57. The United Nations must immediately ensure an adequate presence to investigate and monitor the deteriorating situation in Kosovo to prevent it from escalating into a conflict that would threaten the security of Europe. It must, in particular, prevent the emergence of human rights violations through the establishment of early-warning mechanisms, take proper actions once serious human rights situations arose with a view to preventing further escalation and take proper action in the humanitarian field, if necessary, in order to prevent the emergence and/or escalation of humanitarian crises.

58. Mrs. BENNANI (Morocco) said that, although the question of human rights was a priority item on the international agenda and most Governments were striving to promote and defend human rights, the obstacles to attainment of those goals required special attention and international cooperation in a number of areas. Such cooperation was particularly important since the world was going through a period of conflicts, confrontation and attempts to derail the process of democracy accompanied often by violence and terror, and denial of elementary human rights such as the rights to life, dignity and security.

59. The peaceful coexistence of various communities and ethnic or religious groups was jeopardized by mindless and violent racism. Considering the great scientific and technological progress that had been made in recent years, it was inconceivable that millions of people were still dying of such things as hunger and easily curable diseases, and that actions such as the illegal trafficking of organs still took place.

60. She welcomed the consensus of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights with respect to development, democracy and human rights. Everything possible must be done to guarantee the universal implementation of human rights.

61. In that connection, the developing countries that had embarked upon a path of democracy and promotion of human rights depended to a large extent on the representatives of the authorities, particularly the police and the judiciary. It was public knowledge that the police in developing countries were badly trained, poorly equipped and badly paid. Yet, it was those very representatives of the authorities and police who must respect and ensure respect for human rights. The judiciary was also paid a pittance. Prisons lacked resources, were run down, overpopulated and therefore offered very little comfort for prisoners. Those who advocated respect for human rights should demonstrate their solidarity by providing the financial, material and technical assistance to Governments that wanted to promote human rights.

62. Morocco had, under a policy elaborated by His Majesty the King, implemented a number of legislative, administrative and educational measures recommended by the Consultative Committee for Human Rights established in 1990. Those measures included instruction in human rights and in the international conventions to which Morocco was a party in training institutions. In 1992, the people of Morocco had approved the revision of the Constitution which solemnly and explicitly proclaimed the commitment of the Kingdom of Morocco to universally recognized human rights.

(Mrs. Bennani, Morocco)

63. In June 1993, Morocco had ratified the Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. It had also acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

64. The protection of human rights should therefore be respected by everyone without any exception. No political or other considerations should be advanced to justify doing nothing for people who were persecuted, massacred or threatened with extermination.

65. The question of establishing a post of High Commissioner for Human Rights should not be controversial if an in-depth study on existing machinery demonstrated that such a post was necessary to strengthen the promotion of all human rights. Implementation of the right to development must be included in the High Commissioner's mandate. Despite unanimous support for the need to strengthen the Centre for Human Rights, agreement had not been reached about solutions to the Centre's considerable budgetary, material and human resources problems. All countries, particularly those which made human rights their strong suit, should translate their words into deeds.

66. Her delegation hoped that the latest report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia would be circulated as an official document of the Third Committee.

67. Mr. SACIRBY (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that his delegation lamented that Mr. Tadensz Mazowiecki, the Special Rapporteur who had prepared the report on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia (A/48/92), had not been invited by the Commission on Human Rights to address the Third Committee. In the past, his comments had proved especially useful to the international community. In, for instance, A/47/635, he had said that ethnic cleansing did not appear to be the consequence of the war, but rather its goal. In A/47/666 he had remarked that another factor which had contributed to the intensity of ethnic cleansing in areas under Serbian control was the marked imbalance between the weaponry in the hands of the Serbian and the Muslim populations of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the conclusions to that report, he had stated that the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina was not a religious conflict, but one which was formulated by certain nationalist groups and parties in order to further their own political and material interests. His delegation deemed that, if those conclusions had been taken seriously, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina would not still be raging. Lastly, it supported the proposal of Morocco that the report of the Special Rapporteur should be distributed to the General Assembly as an official document.

68. Mr. AL-DOURI (Iraq), exercising the right of reply, said that certain delegations, such as those of the European Community, Sweden and the United States of America, had spoken of Iraq undiplomatically, and that the United States had gone so far as to name the head of another State. Such arrogance required, however, no reply, but the reference to the north of Iraq was amazing: the allies had failed to install economic security in the north of Iraq, and were laying the blame for that failure on Iraq, but since there was no Iraqi

(Mr. Al-Douri, Iraq)

authority, the absence of economic security could not be considered the responsibility of Iraq. He further reiterated that the citizens of the north had acquired their rations in the same way as had all other Iraqis.

69. Furthermore, the problem with the Arabs in the marshlands region of the south of Iraq was entirely fabricated to mask the real problem, i.e. the crime committed in the name of the United Nations against Iraq. A campaign was being waged against Iraq to cover up the vast crime perpetrated against the entire Iraqi people, namely, the crime of an economic siege. Supported by the United States of America and certain European countries, that economic blockade was the crime that was killing Iraqis. If the findings of the Special Rapporteur and the statements of delegations were to be taken seriously, the numbers of displaced persons would add up to hundreds of thousands or even a million, but all such people were nowhere to be found. Even according to the Special Rapporteur, those figures could not be verified. Iraq appeared to be a pawn in an international political game motivated by minor stooges of foreign intelligence agencies seeking to play into the hands of major Powers, which had no real interest in human rights.

70. Mr. FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba), exercising the right of reply, said that the statement of the United States of America was further proof of its plan to use human rights as part of a destabilization campaign against Cuba. Indeed, that country used every opportunity to attack Cuba: its intervention had used language reminiscent of the cold war, and it plainly falsified the reality of Cuba. The reference to illegal immigration was particularly hypocritical, since it was owing to the failure on the part of the United States of America to abide by the existing immigration agreements, indeed, its blocking of the proper legal channels, that had caused the problem of illegal immigration in the first place. The United States of America must halt its aggressive and hostile policy, including its position on immigration, the granting of visas and human rights, against Cuba.

71. Furthermore, Cuba wished to reiterate the reply it had made to the report of the Special Rapporteur on every point.

AGENDA ITEM 111: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued)

Introduction of draft resolutions A/C.3/48/L.30, L.31, L.32, L.33, L.34 and L.35

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.32

72. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said that China and Tanzania had also joined as sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.30

73. Mr. NIETO (Argentina), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said that a number of other countries had joined as sponsors, namely, Afghanistan, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, New Zealand and Venezuela. Certain English-speaking delegations had pointed out problems in the English version of the text, and that language adjustments had been made accordingly which did not in any way alter the substance of the resolution. In

(Mr. Nieto, Argentina)

operative paragraph 2, the word "thereby" should be replaced by "thus", and the word "their" should be stricken. In operative paragraph 3, the word "women", when first used, should be replaced by "gender". In operative paragraph 4, the final phrase "and its expertise in statistics pertaining to women", should be changed to read "and its expertise in gender statistics", deleting the phrase "pertaining to women". In operative paragraph 6, the words "ensuring ... impact", should be replaced by the phrase "attaining a greater outreach and impact of its work".

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.31

74. Mr. TROTTIER (Canada), introducing the resolution on behalf of both the original sponsors and the additional new sponsors (Albania, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Myanmar, Philippines, Poland, Portugal and Senegal), said that the wording of the resolution had remained essentially as adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. The major change was the direct reference to the focal point for women currently functioning within the Secretariat.

75. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that her country wished to add its name to the list of sponsors in draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.31.

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.33

76. Ms. ARIAS (Colombia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, adding that various changes had been made in the text: on page 6, in paragraph 23, the words "to support the convening" should be changed to read "to lend support to the convening". In paragraph 24, the words "from within existing resources" should be added after the word "Secretary-General". In paragraph 26, the word "active" should be added between the words "more" and "important" and the phrase "and to appeal" should be changed to the phrase "in appealing". In paragraph 30, the words "taking into account CSW resolution 37/7", should be added after the word "Decides". On page 8, in subparagraph (f), the words "be eligible to apply for accreditation to" should be replaced by the words "attend all future sessions and".

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.34

77. Mrs. ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said that the latest available data showed that the numbers of rural women living in poverty in the developing countries had increased by almost 50 per cent over the past 20 years. The draft resolution included the urgent need to improve their situation. The primary responsibility for improving the situation of rural women lay, of course, with Governments themselves, and the draft resolution therefore invited Member States to take account of rural women in their national development strategies.

78. He pointed out that, in preambular paragraph 5, the phrase "noting with deep concern" had been replaced by the word "recognizing" and moved to line 3, after the word "and", adding that several other delegations had also joined as sponsors: Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Myanmar, Pakistan and Panama.

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.35

79. Mrs. LIMJUCO (Philippines), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said that it did not seek to ascribe blame but rather invited countries of origin and receiving countries to cooperate in a search for solutions. Although hopeful signs had emerged in the previous year, much remained to be done. She drew the attention of the Committee to a change made on page 2, in operative paragraph 4: the word "should" had been inserted between the words "women" and "form", adding that Myanmar and Spain had joined the list of sponsors.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.